Lambda Letters Project

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Presidential candidates join LGBT forum

Logo, a division of Viacom's MTV Networks, and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation recently announced they will co-present an historic televised forum on issues of importance to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community with the leading 2008 Democratic presidential candidates.

As this newsletter went to press, confirmed candidates included Hillary Clinton, Christopher Dodd, John Edwards, Mike Gravel, Dennis Kucinich, Barack Obama, and Bill Richardson.

The 90-minute event will be held on August 9 at 6 PM PDT before a studio audience in Los Angeles and broadcast live, without commercial interruption, exclusively on Logo's 24/7 cable television channel as well as through live streaming video at LOGOonline.com. (Unfortunately, their video can be viewed only on computers running Windows. They are working hard to make LOGOonline video available to everyone, including Mac users.)

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Marriage bill moves, not inheritance bill

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

The bill to allow same-sex couples to marry, AB 43, was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 10. It now seems likely that it will be approved by the full legislature and then sent to the governor for an almost certain veto.

This, of course, is probably the most important LGBTI rights bill in the legislature this year. It is worth working on it even in the face of a likely veto because doing so helps to normalize the concept of same-sex marriage in the eyes of elected officials and the public.

On the other hand, the Senate Judiciary Committee refused to approve AB 250, another really important LGBTI rights bill. This is a bill that the governor might actually have signed because it provides significant help to heterosexual senior citizens as well as to same-sex couples. They held the bill in committee without even recording a formal vote. They did this in spite of the fact that the bill had previously

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Member recruitment contest extended

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

Last month I announced that I personally will offer a prize of $250 to the person who enrolls the most *dues-paying* members of the Lambda Letters Project by a certain date.

I soon realized that my deadline was too soon, so I have extended that deadline to October 31, 2007.

As I mentioned last month, the person enrolling the second highest number of paid members will win $150, and the third-place winner will get $100. To win a prize, a contestant must submit a minimum of 20 new, paid members. In case of a draw for first second or third prize, the winner will be chosen by lottery.

To qualify, all members enrolled must be new members and must be residents of California. People who wish to compete in the contest can sign up new members and then list their names and contact information on the enclosed pink form. You can list several new members on each form.

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Lambda Letters progress report

Letters collected	
June, 2007	49,120 letters & e-mails
In all of 2007	179,005 letters & e-mails
Dollars spent	
June, 2007	$9,211
In all of 2007	$31,691

Can you help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Our mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; women; and people of low economic status. We urge elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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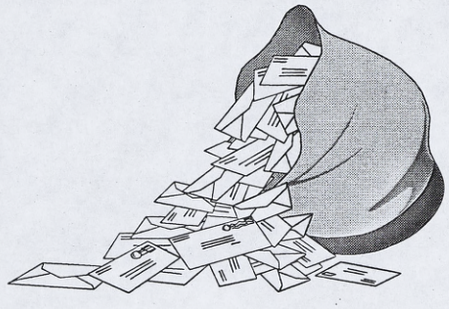

Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684.
In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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Women's issue

Extend confidentiality's sunset date

By Alex Widmann, legislative analyst

Since 1998 California has supported the "Safe at Home" program, which ensures the safety of victims of domestic violence and abuse through address, telephone, and e-mail address confidentiality. Since that time, this law has been expanded to include victims of sexual assault and stalking as well as reproductive health care service providers, employees, and patients.

This law mandates that all participants in the program be provided with a substitute address by the secretary of state, which is then used for all state and local records. This allows the actual residential address of program participants to be kept confidential. All mail sent to the substitute address is forwarded by the secretary of state to the actual address.

The commitment to protecting these victims was unanimously reaffirmed by the legislature in 2006 when the sunset date for this program was extended to 2013. However, one aspect of the program was not included in this extension bill, and it calls for our attention now.

The voter confidentiality portion of this program is currently set to expire on January 1, 2008. This important part of "Safe at Home" provides that the residential address, telephone number and e-mail address is considered confidential on the voter registration card and that participants are considered permanent absentee voters until official termination by the participant.

AB 603, authored by Assemblymember Curren Price (D–Inglewood), seeks to extend this portion of the "Safe at Home" program by establishing January 13, 2013 as the sunset date to coincide with the end date for the rest of the program. This is a critical measure because it allows victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, stalking, and those involved in the reproductive health industry to fully participate as citizens of this state by exercising their voting rights while still preserving their personal security.

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HIV/AIDS issue

Support prevention for youth, elderly

By Lorraine Rinker, legislative analyst

For America and the world, the message is clear: only prevention can stop HIV.

California ranks second in the nation in cumulative AIDS cases, surpassed only by New York. From 1981 through 2003, California accounted for 15% of cumulative AIDS cases reported in the US; and the number of people living with AIDS in California continues to increase as over 57,000 Californians live with HIV/AIDS today.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data from 25 states (California included) with longstanding HIV reporting show that among people aged 25–34 years, the estimated number of new diagnoses from 1994 through 2003 declined by a remarkable 49%. However, in youth aged 13–24, new HIV diagnoses remained stable during this same period. Through June 2001, more than half of all HIV-infected teen males were infected through sex with men. The same data suggests that half of all adolescent females who were infected with HIV were exposed through heterosexual contact and a very small percentage through injection drug use.

CDC prevention research has identified many interventions that help young people adopt healthier behaviors and utilizes abstinence as its primary message for youth. One of the CDC's strategic goals is to increase and sustain safe behaviors among the youth population. "Prevention in a box" is a CDC project that takes interventions proven effective with specific populations and packages them into kits for use by local HIV prevention agencies. Of 10 interventions, three serve youth only and two others include youth in their populations served.

The focus continues to be on younger populations. However, there is also a growing HIV/AIDS problem developing among the elderly. This problem among

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Economic justice issue

Continue affordable health care programs

By Rebecca Chamow, legislative analyst

Issues related to health care in California have been getting a great deal of attention recently.

The governor has pledged his commitment to make affordable health care more widely available throughout the state, and the legislature is doing the same.

One bill, AB 2 by Assemblymember Mervyn Dymally (D–Compton), is a very important part of this effort. This bill is intended to continue the California Major Risk Medical Insurance Program (MRMIP), a program that provides affordable health insurance to those who cannot obtain it on the open market because of their medical history.

AB 2 essentially creates a "pay or play" requirement for health plans in regard to the MRMIP. This bill would require every health plan or health insurer selling health coverage in California to either guarantee coverage to all individual applicants, without regard to health status, or pay a fee to the state.

It would also extend a current pilot program, which expires at the end of this year, so that as of January 1, 2008, all individuals covered in the pilot program will be included in the MRMIP. This bill creates a guarantee of continued coverage for people who cannot obtain it on the open market because of their medical history.

Creating this type of requirement for health plans helps ensure fair coverage for all individuals who are in need of health insurance.

The MRMIP supports the mission of the governor and the legislature by expanding health care to those who are in need of coverage. It is an important step toward creating a more fair and equitable statewide health care system.

Please write to the Senate Appropriations Committee, and urge them to support AB 2.

LGBTI issue

Help end hate crimes

By Shirin Buckman, legislative analyst

Assembly Joint Resolution 29 asks Congress to support the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (LLEHCPA), also known as the Matthew Shepard Act. The LLEHCPA would strengthen the ability of federal, state, and local governments to investigate and prosecute hate crimes based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability.

The LLEHCPA is currently pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee after being passed in the House of Representatives. Under the current hate crimes law, federal prosecution is permitted only if the offense occurred while the victim was engaged in a federally protected activity, such as voting or going to school. This bill would eliminate that requirement.

AJR 29 increases resources given to local law enforcement agencies (including training) to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. The bill emphasizes that hate crime investigation and prosecution is to remain under the jurisdiction of local law enforcement unless the state lacks jurisdiction, does not intend to exercise it, requests federal assistance, or does not object to federal intervention. In addition, and most importantly, sexual orientation and gender identity are included as protected classes under the federal act.

The FBI reports that in 2005, 13.8% of hate crime victims (1289 cases out of 7,163) were targeted based on their sexual orientation. In addition, only 11 states in the US have hate crime laws on the books which explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes. That is why it is so important that LLEHCPA passes.

According to the California Attorney General's 2005 Hate Crime Report, there were 255 hate crimes based on sexual orientation in California. The number of sexual orientation hate crimes accounts for 18.3% of the 1,397 hate crimes in California in 2005. Thirteen hate crimes were based on gender identity.

Why is hate crime legislation so important? The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that the number of hate groups in the US continued to grow in 2006, increasing 5% over the prior year to 844 total groups. In addition, underreporting of hate crimes because of the victim's lack of knowledge about the criminal justice system, fear of retaliation, linguistic and cultural barriers, immigration status, and prior negative experience with governmental agencies prevents law enforcement from prosecuting hate criminals. The National Criminal Victimization Survey also indicates that only 92,000, or less than 44%, of hate crime victimizations between 2000 and 2003 were reported to the police. Hate crimes legislation will support law enforcement in recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting hate crimes.

Please write your senator and ask him or her to support AJR 29. As one of the largest and most progressive states in the country, California must make its voice heard nationally. We want all-inclusive hate crimes legislation.

Women's issue

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In 2005 approximately 125 women in California were killed as result of domestic violence; over 200,000 cases of sexual assault occurred in the US in that year alone. The "Safe at Home" program presently serves 2,242 individuals, 43% of whom are children.

If the sunset date is extending, more victims and people at risk who are in need of these confidentiality services will be helped, and more lives can be saved. Additionally, the approval of this bill will have no additional fiscal impact as it is already part of an established program. The passage of AB 603 would simply allow victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and workers in the reproductive health field to continue to be protected during the voting process.

Please write to the Senate Appropriations Committee, and urge them to support AB 603.

People of color issue

Stop voter intimidation

By Marty Martinez, legislative analyst

Voter intimidation threatens the foundation of our democracy and helps frustrate the enactment of a progressive policy agenda. According to information provided by Assemblymember Curren Price's office, in October 2006, individuals affiliated with an Orange County Congressional candidate sent a letter to 14,000 foreign-born Latino Democrats, written entirely in Spanish, which stated that immigrants are not allowed to vote.

Assemblymember Jose Solorio (D–Anaheim), then a city council member, was one of the recipients of this letter. Fortunately, the secretary of state worked with various advocacy organizations on a public education campaign to correct this misinformation. That public education campaign was essential in helping to reassure legally registered voters that they were eligible to vote, and that they would not be prosecuted or harassed for participating in the democratic process.

While this attempt at intimidation was countered, there's no guarantee that the resources or willpower will be available for similar voter education campaigns to respond to future cases of voter intimidation.

AB 288 by Assemblymember Price (D–Inglewood) seeks to ensure that when an act of voter intimidation occurs, the financial resources are available to respond to that crime and to reassure those voters who were the targets of the intimidation that they have the right to vote. This bill allows courts to fine any individual who is convicted of committing voter intimidation or coercion, and deposit that fine in a Voter Intimidation Restitution Fund for the purposes of voter education campaigns that address the specific crime committed.

By holding the individuals and organizations that perpetrate acts of voter intimidation financially responsible for the costs of countering those acts of intimidation, AB 288 will help reduce acts of voter intimidation. A responsible democracy requires such protections. Please write to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Urge them to support this important bill.

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August legislative update

If you have been paying attention to these legislative updates, you may notice that this month's list is considerably shorter than in recent months. The reason is that June 8 was the deadline for bills getting out of their house of origin. Bills that did not get approved by their first house by that date are dead for this year. Many of the bills we have been tracking did not make that deadline.

Those bills stayed in the July issue of our newsletter so you could see what happened to them. This month we have removed them from the list. By the way, many of them may have one more chance next January. They can be brought up again then, but then they will have to be out of their house of origin by January 31 or they are truly dead.

In some cases, the status line will say that the bill is in the Senate or Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. This means that the committee decided to put off a vote on the bill until the deadline for getting bills out of the appropriations committees. That deadline is August 31, 2007.

Note: Because of our early deadline for submitting information to the newsletter, the status of some of the following bills may have changed by the time you read this. To get the latest information, visit lambdaletters.org and click the Legislative Update link in the main menu. The status of the bills in that list is updated daily.

Here is a list of the bills we are tracking at this time.

HIV/AIDS issues

AB 66 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To require that prison inmates be tested for HIV shortly after imprisonment and shortly before release from prison unless the person declines testing. If they are found to be HIV-positive prior to release from prison, inmates' parole officers must be told. Inmates' spouses or domestic partners would also be told. Would require that a care and treatment plan should be devised for each inmate who tests positive.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 110 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To allow local governments that establish clean needle and syringe exchange programs to use state general funds to purchase clean needles and syringes for use in their programs.
Status: To be voted on the Senate floor on July 16.
LLP position: Support.

AB 659 (Fiona Ma, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To urge the development of age-appropriate HIV/AIDS educational materials for youth and senior citizens. Would also request the University of California to study the impact of HIV/AIDS on seniors.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1334 (Sandre Swanson, D–Alameda)
Purpose: To allow the distribution of condoms and other sexual barriers to prison inmates.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 443 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow the use for therapeutic insemination of sperm or use of sperm in other advanced reproductive technologies if the sperm donor is found reactive for HIV or HTLV-1.
Status: Approved by both houses. Awaiting Senate approval of changes made to the bill in the Assembly.
LLP position: Watch.

SCR 3 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To request the Department of Transportation, upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost, to erect informational signs on a specified portion of State Highway Route 5 in Los Angeles County directing motorists to The Wall–Las Memorias Project AIDS monument.
Status: Approved by the legislature. No further action needed.
LLP position: Support.

Economic justice issues

AB 1 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To improve children's access to health insurance and delete the citizenship and immigration status requirements to qualify for the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To continue a program that provides affordable health insurance to those who are otherwise uninsurable due to medical history.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 8 (Fabian Núñez, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: This bill would, as of January 1, 2010, create the California Cooperative Health Insurance Purchasing Program (Cal-CHIPP), which would function as a purchasing pool for health care coverage by employers.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 12 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To provide health insurance to the employees of small businesses.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 17 (Bill Emerson, R–Rancho Cucamonga)
Purpose: To assess a voluntary $50 fee on anyone seeking to obtain or renew a dental license. The money would be used to provide incentives for dentists to work in dentally underserved areas.
Status: Referred to the Senate Business and Professions Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 167 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To help people transition from CalWORKs to self-sufficiency by eliminating the limit on assets they can have and still qualify for CalWORKs.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 176 (Dave Jones, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: Current law states that a participant in CalWORKs who receives any child support must turn that money (except $50) over to the CalWORKs program. This bill would allow a recipient with one child to keep $100 of child support money, and a recipient with two children to keep $200.

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Legislative update

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Status: Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

AB 184 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require services under the state's Independent Living Program to be provided to former dependent foster children to help them to transition to self-sufficiency.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1078 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To take steps to help CalWORKs participants take maximum advantage of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 3 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to increase funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Utilities and Commerce Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 11 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow virtually any two people to register as domestic partners, eliminating the requirement that domestic partners be of the same sex or that one of them be over 62 (in the case of opposite-sex couples).
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 20 (Tom Torlakson, D–Concord)
Purpose: To motivate schools to provide free meals to students on limited income and to motivate the schools to serve only healthy food.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 32 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To allow all California children whose family income is under 300% of the federal poverty level to have access to the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs. It would also eliminate the rules that deny coverage to some based on citizenship or immigration status.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 42 (Tom Torlakson, D–Concord)
Purpose: To qualify for CalWORKs public assistance, people must be engaged in work activities, with certain exceptions, unless they are enrolled in an approved education program. This bill would also exempt them from work if they have applied for, but not yet been accepted by, an approved education program.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 48 (Elaine Alquist, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the state, to the extent that funds are appropriated, to establish the "Healthy Food Retail Innovations Fund," providing residents of underserved communities with retail food markets that would offer high-quality fruit, vegetables, and other healthy foods and encourage retail innovation. Would also require the state to provide grants and loans for land acquisition, business plan development, feasibility studies, refrigeration units, outside technical assistance, and other startup costs. Fund to run until January 1, 2015.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 119 (Gilbert Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require that residential drug and alcohol treatment services for persons aged 12 to 20 be a benefit covered by the Medi-Cal Drug Treatment Program.
Status: Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 137 (Tom Torlackson, D–Antioch)
Purpose: The state and counties run treatment services for physically handicapped persons under the age of 21 in families with income of $40,000 or less. This bill would change that eligibility limitation to persons in a family with an annual or monthly income equal to or less than 400% of the federal poverty level.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 275 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit hospitals from dumping indigent patients on the streets after discharging them from the hospital.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 785 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To establish forms and procedures to provide mental health care to certain children in foster care.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 840 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To establish a single-payer health insurance program (where the state collects funds from various sources and then pays all medical bills), which would provide affordable health insurance to every person in California.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

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LGBTI issues

AB 14 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To prohibit California businesses from withholding services to customers because of the customer's sexual orientation, among other things, or from encouraging other businesses to do so.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor, possibly on July 16.
LLP position: Support.

AB 43 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to marry in California.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 102 (Fiona Ma, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow a woman to retain her maiden name when she marries. It would allow men to easily change their last name to their wife's maiden name when they marry. Would also allow either or both domestic partners to change their name when registering their domestic partnership, using the same simple procedure a women now uses in changing her last name when she marries. In addition, it would create a process by which domestic partners, upon registering with the state, could change their names as easily as women can now when getting a marriage license.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 250 (Chuck DeVore, R–Irvine)
Purpose: To allow the owner of real property to complete a brief document transferring the property to another person upon the death of the owner. The property transferred would not have to go through the expensive, lengthy probate process.
Status: Held in the Senate Judiciary Committee. May be reconsidered in January 2008.
LLP position: Support. If passed, this law could help many same-sex couples.

AB 384 (Anthony Portantino, D–La Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: For the University of California and Cal State University, this bill would excuse the mandatory system-wide tuition and fees for any surviving spouse, domestic partner, or surviving child or stepchild of a deceased federal firefighter who was performing services in this state, upon specified circumstances. Would also provide health benefits to these family members of a federal civilian fire fighter who dies in the line of duty.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 392 (Ted Lieu, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To require employers to allow an employee who is a spouse of a member of the armed forces, National Guard, or Reserves to take up to 10 days of unpaid leave during a leave period of the service member.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support if bill is amended to include domestic partners of service members.

AB 394 (Lloyd Levine, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Education to monitor adherence to the anti-discrimination and anti-harassment requirements as part of its regular monitoring and review of public schools and school districts.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 537 (Sandre Swanson, D–Alameda)
Purpose: To require employers to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period to care for a seriously ill domestic partner, among others.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 629 (Julia Brownley, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To require school-based sex education programs to be comprehensive, age-appropriate, and medically accurate. They must not teach religion or encourage bias against people on any of several bases, including sexual orientation.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 29 (Mike Eng, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To ask Congress to add bans on sexual orientation and gender identity hate crimes to the federal hate crimes law.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Awaiting committee assignment in the Senate.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 518 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require the Division of Juvenile Justice and local juvenile facilities to provide care, placement, and services to children in their custody without discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, among others.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 559 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To require that any transfer of property between registered domestic partners that occurred on or after January 1, 2000, and before January 1, 2006, be exempt from reappraisal and increased property taxes based upon a reappraisal. If a person requests reversal of a previous reappraisal, because of this law, on or before June 30, 2009, the county must do it. But the reversed reappraisal would be effective only from the time the request was made.
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 727 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To expand the types of people that an employee can take six weeks of partly paid leave to care for, to include the parents of one's domestic partner
Status: Assigned to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 777 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica)
Purpose: To ban employment discrimination in public and private colleges and universities, or discrimination in instructional activities, or in educational materials on the bases of disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic contained in the definition of hate crimes found in California law.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor.
LLP position: Support.

SJR 6 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To ask Congress to revoke the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in the armed services.
Status: Approved by both houses. Legislative action is now complete.
LLP position: Support.

People of color issues

AB 34 (Anthony Portantino, D–Pasadena)
Purpose: To require the state to create a pilot program to increase the ethnic diversity of the umbilical cord blood supply in blood banks. It

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Legislative update

Continued from page 7

would select blood banks in ethnically diverse areas to participate in the program.
Status: Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 72 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To encourage schools to teach about the contributions of Filipinos during World War II.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 174 (Curren Price, D–Irvine)
Purpose: To allow the State Personnel Board to order a state agency that is found to discriminate in its employment actions to take various remedial actions, including payment of reasonable attorney's fees to the employee.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

AB 288 (Curren Price, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To fine those who intimidate people to either vote or not vote. Would use fines to pay for voter education programs.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 295 (Ted Lieu, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To require state agencies, when collecting demographic data, to include categories allowing people to identify themselves as members of a particular races or nationalities that are not currently on the list.
Status: Assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 512 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To require that when a businessperson negotiates specified loans or extensions of credit primarily in the languages of Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean, that person must also provide summaries of the loan or credit documents in those languages.
Status: Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 658 (Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the state Department of Health to prepare a report on Homicide among African Americans in California. If funds are available, this bill would establish pilot projects to seek to reduce homicides among African Americans in Oakland and Los Angeles.
Status: Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 976 (Charles Calderon, D–Whittier)
Purpose: To prohibit a city, county, or city and county from requiring a landlord to, among other things, compile, disclose, report, provide, or otherwise take any action regarding the characteristics of a tenant or a prospective tenant based on the immigration or citizenship status of that tenant. The bill would also prohibit a landlord from independently performing any of these acts.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor. **LLP position:** Support.

ACR 21 (Anthony Portantino, D–La Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: To urge the regents of the University of California to establish a student exchange program, or another form of academic partnership, between one or more campuses of the University of California and one or more of the institutions that are classified as historically black colleges and universities.
Status: Approved by the Senate Education Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support

AJR 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to give veterans benefits to Filipino Americans who served in the US armed services during World War II and to ask that efforts be made to speed up reunification of them and their families, where their families are awaiting visas.
Status: Approved by Assembly. Approved by the Senate Veterans Committee. Probably headed for a final vote on the Senate floor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 1 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To create an Office of Immigrant Affairs to help immigrants successfully integrate into American society. It would authorize the office to enter into contracts with nonprofit groups to help the process.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 26 (Joseph Simitian, D–Palo Alto)
Purpose: To require state agencies to allow people to select one or more categories when agencies obtain information about people's ethnicity.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 60 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the Department of Motor Vehicles to report on certain issues relating to the Federal Real ID Act. This act allows states to issue drivers licenses to certain undocumented immigrants.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 192 (Denise Ducheny, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To continue a program for which certain licensing requirements were due to expire in 2008. The program provides a group, employer-provided health insurance program for Mexican nationals legally employed in San Diego and Imperial Counties for medical care provided to employees and their families in Mexico. The doctors providing treatment must meet licensing requirements in both California and Mexico. The bill extends this licensing requirement indefinitely.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor.
LLP position: Support.

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SB 552 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish a program for providing compensation to those who were unconstitutionally deported to Mexico during the 1930s.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP position: Support.

SCR 58 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To encourage schools to teach about the illegal deportations of Mexican American US citizens and legal residents during the 1930s.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's issues

AB 28 (Jared Huffman, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To extend the program that allows people to send additional dollars with their state income tax returns, and to ask that the extra money be given to the California Breast Cancer Research Fund.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 76 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to design rehabilitation programs to meet the unique needs of women prisoners.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 225 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To reduce the number of harassing phone calls to another person that is required to trigger penalties for making harassing phone calls. It would make the law tougher on those who harass others.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Public Safety.
LLP position: Support.

AB 268 (Charles Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To excuse from testifying in court people who attend the hearing but refuse to testify because of intimidation by one of the parties to the court case.
Status: Held in Senate Judiciary Committee. Hearing postponed by committee.
LLP position: Support.

AB 335 (Kevin De Leon, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow CalWORKs public assistance to be provided to a domestic abuse victim on the basis of sworn statements that he or she became homeless because of domestic abuse.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 435 (Julia Brownley, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To require employers to keep wage and job classification records for up to five years. This would allow employees up to five years to file sex-based wage discrimination complaints against employers and collect back wages due.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 502 (Charles Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To enact legislation creating a pilot program that enables a community-based organization to provide legal advice and aid to victims of domestic violence who are undocumented immigrants.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 603 (Curren Price, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To extend the deadline until 2013 of laws that protect the confidentiality of victims of domestic violence who seek help from domestic violence programs, and of people who are served by family planning programs.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1275 (Mark DeSaulnier, D–Concord)
Purpose: To allow counties to increase fees for copies of marriage certificates, birth certificates, and death records for the purpose of funding governmental oversight and coordination of domestic violence prevention, early intervention, and prosecution efforts in the county—up to a maximum increase of $4.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Local Government Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1429 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require health care services plans and health insurance contracts to cover the cost of cervical cancer vaccination.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 1679 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To amend current law to allow attorney's fees to be included in support payments due to a child in a divorce or separation case.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hearing cancelled by the author.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 11 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To declare October 2007 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 15 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To commemorate January 2007 as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 4 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To ask Congress to end a $25 fee charged to families who do not go on public assistance but who do receive at least $500 in child support with the help of a state child support collection program.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 265 (Gloria Romero, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To state that the Division of Juvenile Justice shall explore options to provide programming for female offenders outside of division facilities. On or before January 1, 2009, the division shall transfer all female offenders out of division facilities.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 524 (Ellen Corbett, D–San Leandro)
Purpose: To allow the victim of domestic violence to have his or her voter registration records kept confidential to avoid an abuser from using those records to find the victim.
Status: Approved by the Senate. Referred to the Senate Elections Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 836 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To ban employment discrimination based on familial status, meaning employers could not discriminate against a person who does or may have to care for another family member.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

Presidential candidates

Continued from page 1

Logo is the nation's leading television and broadband channel for the LGBT audience and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation is the educational arm of the nation's largest LGBT civil rights organization.

This event marks the first time in history that the major presidential candidates will address a live LGBT television audience on the issues that are most important and relevant to them.

The candidates will appear sequentially and engage in conversation with co-panelists Melissa Etheridge, performer and advocate, and Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. The panelists plan to cover a range of issues including relationship recognition, marriage equality, workplace fairness, the military, hate crimes, HIV/AIDS, and other important issues. Discussions are continuing with a variety of journalists and a moderator for the forum will be announced in the near future.

The forum will include significant online components at LOGOonline.com and HRC.org, including online question submission. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation and Logo invited the leading Democratic and Republican candidates to participate in the forum.

The LGBT vote is considered a decisive electoral force and, according to exit poll data, makes up approximately 4% of the voting population. Los Angeles was chosen as the site for the event because of the state's early primary election, on February 5, 2008.

***Note:** We gratefully acknowledge that this information was provided by the Human Rights Campaign.*

Marriage bill

Continued from page 1

gotten through two Assembly committees without a single no vote. On the Assembly floor, 79 of the 80 members voted for it; only Nell Soto (D–Ontario) was absent.

AB 250 would allow the owner of a home to transfer title to the home, at his or her death, by competing a brief *revocable* transfer on death deed. It is designed mainly to help heterosexual senior citizens who live together to share expenses, but who don't marry because the woman would lose her social security. The bill would allow the homeowner to assure that his friend will still have a place to live if the homeowner dies first. Title to the property would transfer immediately on the death of the homeowner. The home would not have to go through the lengthy, expensive probate process.

This bill is very important to same-sex couples as well. Many of them move in together in their 30s or 40s. Often one or both of them have had two or three failed relationships previously. One of them owns their home. Given those past relationship failures, it would be foolhardy for the homeowner to immediately transfer their home to joint ownership. But the homeowner might want his or her partner to get the home if the owner dies first. With the revocable transfer on death deed, the owner gets the best of both worlds. If the relationship sours, the owner can just revoke the deed. If it doesn't sour, and the owner dies first, the surviving partner gets the home with very little fuss or expense.

Some people worry that bad people will persuade homeowners to compete the transfer on death deed to rob the owner of his home. But who is going to rob your home by getting a deed that does not mature until you die? They are much more likely to persuade you to sign a deed that gives them immediate ownership. That deed would be irreversible. A revocable transfer deed could be revoked prior to the home owner's death if it was determined that someone defrauded the owner.

Others complain that the deed is too confusing. They appear to say that people won't understand the purpose of the deed, and it will be misused. But they don't cite any likely misuses of it. The concept is really simple: If you want to deed your home to someone at your death, this document would do it.

The Senate Judiciary Committee staff recommended that the bill be sent to the California Law Revision Commission for study. But the Commission representative noted that a previous version of the bill had been referred to them. They liked the concept so much that they were now the sponsors of AB 250. He said there was nothing left for the Commission to study.

So the committee decided to just hold the bill for study. It can be considered again in January. We will probably be trying to persuade them to pass it then.

Recruitment contest extended

Continued from page 1

When you complete the form, send it and the new members' dues payments to:

The Lambda Letters Project
717 K Street, Suite 224
Sacramento, CA 95814

After we receive the completed form, we will send you a new form for use in enlisting more dues-paying members. Contestants have until October 31, 2007, to recruit new members. All entry forms must be received no later than the close of business that day. However, I encourage you to send in the entry forms as soon as each one is filled out. That way we can begin services to the new members as soon as possible.

One final note for those who think Lambda Letters' money should not be spent paying prizes. It will not be. All prize money will come out of my own pocket.

So there you have it. I look forward to hearing that many new memberships are coming in as a response to this challenge.

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HIV/AIDS issue

Continued from page 3

those over 50 will only continue to grow as baby boomers continue to lead active lifestyles in their senior years. Although only 14% of all US-reported HIV/AIDS cases have occurred in people over 50, this number has risen twice as fast as the number in the 13–49 age range. Before 1988, the CDC reported virtually no HIV infections traced to drug use in people over 50; today drug use accounts for 17% of those infections.

According to the National Institute on Aging (NIA, part of the US National Institutes of Health), the number of HIV/AIDS cases among older people continues to grow each year because older Americans know less about HIV/AIDS than younger people. They do not always know how it spreads or the importance of using condoms, not sharing needles, getting tested for HIV, and talking about it with their doctor.

The National Association on HIV Over Fifty (NAHOF) says that there are specific ways to target older people: "Specific programs must be implemented for older adults who need to be informed about the transmission and prevention of HIV, more research is needed to study seniors' sexual and drug-using behaviors to determine HIV disease progression, and treatments and programs aimed at reaching health care and service providers should cover misdiagnoses, treatments, support groups, and more."

Only prevention can stop HIV. According to the CDC, scientific evidence indicates that the public listens to and acts on clear, compelling health information. Prevention efforts have helped slow the rate of new infections in the United States from over 150,000 per year in the late 1980s to 40,000 today.

Please write to the Senate Appropriations Committee and ask them to vote for AB 659. With the signature of Governor Schwarzenegger, California can create communication strategies to inform, influence, and educate its youth and elderly effectively about their health, maintain safer behaviors, and help others at risk stay uninfected.

Collective bargaining

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

What does it take for the LGBTI community to obtain its goals? It takes collective bargaining.

So what does collective bargaining have to do with LGBTI rights? Up until the end of the first half of the 1900s, many workers labored under appalling conditions. Their pay was very low, working conditions were often unsafe, they were expected to work six days a week, and they got no health insurance. Most of the things now considered to be the natural rights of employees were not recognized.

Collective bargaining is the major force that changed all of that for most workers. They set up unions in which large groups of employees spoke with one voice to demand improvements in the workplace. Employees, through the unions, debated just what they wanted the unions to demand for workers. Employees routinely contributed money (dues) to the unions to help them do their work. Many people did the nitty-gritty work that the union had to do to accomplish its goals, such as answering phones, mailing flyers, and walking picket lines.

All of this resulted in vast changes in the workplace. For example, a friend of mine tells me that his grandfather once worked as a teacher for $12 a month. Now the San Francisco School District pays teachers up to $76,000 per year. It is this massive, united effort of many thousands of workers that made these improvements happen.

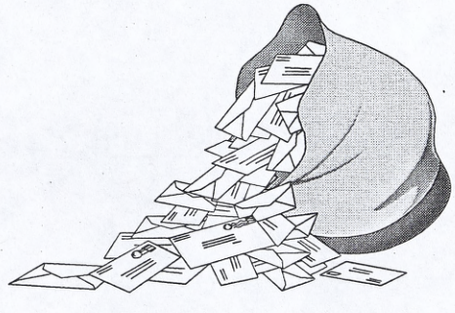
The collective bargaining model could be applied to the struggle for LGBTI rights. A number of organizations across the state are fighting for those rights. These might be considered our community's equivalent of the labor unions. Their financial strength varies widely but they all receive financial support from a small fraction of the LGBTI community. They could work much more effectively if the LGBTI community provided widespread financial support like workers do for their unions.

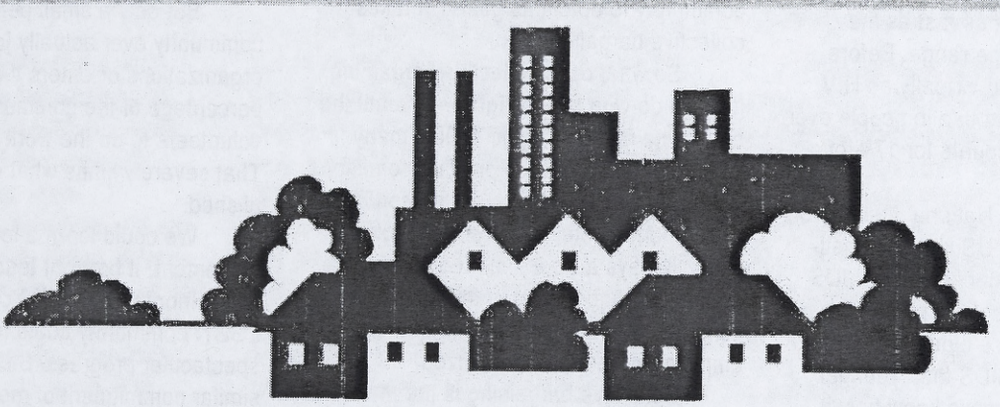
These groups could provide an excellent setting in which members of the community could debate and come to consensus on the basic goals for which our community should be fighting.

But only a small percentage of the community ever actually joins these organizations or enters the debate. A slim percentage of the community actually volunteers to do the work of the community. That severely limits what can be accomplished.

We could learn a lot from the labor movement. It brought teachers salaries from $12 a month to $76,000 per year. The LGBTI community could make similarly spectacular progress. But it would take a similar commitment of money, time, and effort on the part of community members. It would take collective bargaining.

Please get involved to make sure that your goals are on the table, and that they are indeed accomplished.





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